



National Dropout Prevention Center
for Students with Disabilities

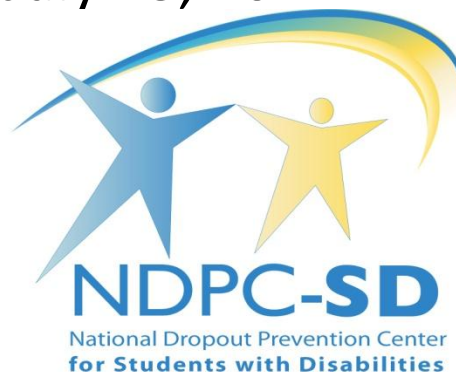
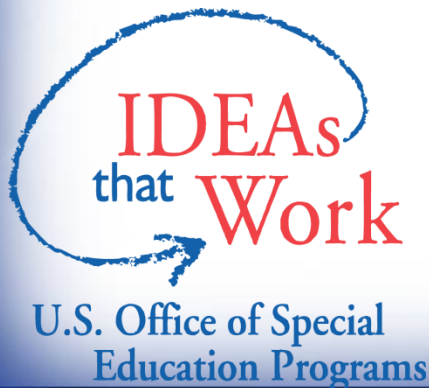
Dropout Prevention and Intervention for Students with Disabilities

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National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with
Disabilities

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Session Objectives

Identify specific evidence-based interventions and programs addressing dropout among students with disabilities



identify issues related to the utilization of dropout prevention research



Discuss implications for future research in this area



Identify research gaps and improve information sharing

Why Dropout Prevention Matters



Incarceration



Homelessness



Health care



Unemployment



Interventions and Programs

Cobb Synthesis
IES Practice Guide
Additional Research

Effective Models

(Cobb, 2005)

- Synthesis of the evidence-based research associated with instructional interventions that reduce dropout for youth with disabilities
- Systematic review of the literature published between 1984 – 2003 related to discovering “what works” in transition from school to post-school environments for youth with disabilities

Effective Models

(Cobb, 2005)

- Approximately 560 studies were reviewed and subjected to rigorous screening
- This process reduced the number of studies included in the review to 30
 - 16 Cognitive Behavioral Interventions
 - 7 Applied Behavioral Analytic Interventions
 - 7 Counseling Interventions
- Samples were exclusively youth with disabilities or were, in part, youth with disabilities
- Ages 12-22 enrolled in public or private schools, residential treatment centers or day treatment centers



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Effective Models

(Cobb, 2005)

Original Study Outcomes

- Staying in school; retention in support programs designed to keep students in school
- Attendance
- Engagement with school
- Physical or verbal aggression
- Self-concept; self-esteem

Effective Models

(Cobb, 2005)

- Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI)
 - Curriculum training in problem solving, self-instruction, and situation self-awareness, including mentoring, teacher and peer modeling
- Key studies
 - Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley, 1998
 - Pressely & Hughes, 2000
 - Barkley, Edwards, Laneri, Fletcher, & Metevia, 2001
- Equally effective with younger and older adolescents and in schools as well as in residential and day treatment centers

Effective Models

(Cobb, 2005)

- Applied Behavioral Analytic Interventions (ABA)
 - Designed to help students learn; frequency and intensity of interventions are increased in order to reach optimum learning; response cost interventions
- Key studies
 - Licht, Gard, & Guardino, 1991
 - Myaard, Crawford, Jackson, & Alessi, 2000
- Programs focused on behaviors that lead to adolescents exiting school early (voluntary and involuntary)

Effective Models

(Cobb, 2005)

- Counseling/Therapeutic Interventions
 - Individual, group, family, and psycho-educational counseling along with vocational education; behavioral contracts, social skills training, individual psychotherapy, and wrap-around services
- Key studies
 - Hess, Rosenberg, & Levy, 1990
 - Sinha & Kapur, 1999
- Counseling programs embedded within the school that generalized to all of the students' environments, especially for students with emotional disorders

Conclusions

(Cobb, 2005)

- Cognitive-behavioral Interventions – (YES)
 - Appears best for high incidence disabilities
- Applied Behavior Analytic Interventions – (Cautious Yes)
 - Appears useful to reduce verbally and physically aggressive behavior and both high and low incidence disabilities
- Counseling Interventions – (No Judgment Can Be Made)
 - Appears useful specifically for students with emotional disorders

Conclusions

(Cobb, 2005)

- Cognitive-behavioral interventions, like *Check and Connect*, can be relied upon to work well under a variety of contexts provided they are implemented with fidelity and over extended periods of time
- Compared to the transition and academic literature, the dropout prevention literature is extremely limited in special education – more focus on this outcome area
- In particular – most of the commonly perceived effective interventions in the general literature have not been tested in special education



IES Practice Guide

Dynarski, M., Clarke, L., Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., and Smink, J. (2008).
Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide (NCEE 2008–4025).

- ***Diagnostic processes*** to identify current students at risk of dropping out
- **School-wide Interventions** designed to enhance student engagement and a sense of belonging for all students.
- ***Targeted interventions*** for a subset of middle and high school students who are identified as at risk of dropping out



IES Practice Guide

Diagnostic processes

- Comprehensive data systems to identify current students at risk of dropping out; incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavior problems, and retention; and monitor students' academic and social performance continuously

School wide Interventions

- Rigorous and relevant instruction to help engage students in learning and provide them the skills needed to graduate and to succeed after they leave school (including academic and career related programs)



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- **School-wide Interventions** designed to enhance student engagement and a sense of belonging for all students.
 - Personalize the learning environments and instructional processes (e.g., freshman academies, small learning communities, peer tutors, co-teaching)
 - A safe and orderly school climate where students feel welcome and supported
 - Extra curricula activities and programs to promote school bonding for marginalized students
 - Support to students who enter critical transitions without adequate skills in reading, math, and other core content



Targeted interventions for a subset of middle and high school students who are identified as “at risk of dropping out”

Research – based Examples:

- Assignment of adult advocates who serve as monitors, mentors, and or coaches to students who are at risk of dropping out
- Academic support (tutoring, study skills training, strategy instruction, credit recovery, test prep) and enrichment to improve academic performance in core content areas



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NDPC-SD

Targeted interventions for a subset of middle and high school students who are identified as “at risk of dropping out”

Research – based Examples:

- Programs to improve students’ classroom behavior and social skills, including PBS, behavioral contracts and training in problem solving skills.
- Targeted models that provide multiple strategies to help students bond with school (Service Learning, Check and Connect, ALAS)
- Discussions during IEP meetings of critical risk factors that place students at risk for school dropout and impact the delivery of FAPE.

What Else We Know

Martin, Tobin, and Sugai, 2002; Wagner, et al., 2005)

- Dropout is COMPLEX – there is no one solution – the costs are substantial
- School structures, policies and practices play a major role in influencing student decisions to leave school.
- SWD are at considerable risk- problem behaviors coupled with academic difficulties or prior academic failures, lack of relevant curricular, and lack of school connections are predictive factors



What Else We Know

(Abt Associates, 2004; Balfanz & Hergoz, 2005; Bost & Riccomini, 2006; Finn, 1993; Thurlow, Sinclair and Johnson, 2002; Wagner, 2005)

- Repeated use of exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension, has been identified as a major push factor
- Poorly performing schools and unsupportive school climates are prime venues for school dropout
- Academic progress and school completion are not equally distributed across disability, income, or ethnicity.



What Else We Know

- A strong relationship between freshmen year indicators and graduation rates exists for all students; however, rates are differential for:
 - students with learning disabilities,
 - students with mild cognitive disabilities,
 - students with emotional disturbances, and
 - students who enter high school two or more years below grade level

(Allensworth & Easton, 2007)



What Else We Know

- Family engagement increases communication between home and school and ultimately improves student outcomes

Research – based Examples:

- Inviting parents to be part of school teams and committees
- Hold parent conferences or support groups
- Provide feedback to parents on student progress more frequently
- Make home visits
- Report more than just negative behavior
- Provide opportunities and access to parent training



What else We Know

(Benz, et al., 2000; Corbett, et al., 2002; Kemp, 2006; Benz, et al., 2000; Sinclair, et al., 2005; Kortering, et al., 2002; Martin, et al., 2002, Test et. Al, 2008).

Effective transition services help to mediate critical skills

Research – based Examples:

- Host career days and opportunities for work-related experiences
- Conduct visits to postsecondary campuses.
- Provide extra assistance and information about the demands of college.
- Create local business partnerships to provide opportunities for work-related experiences



Issues related to Implementation

Capacity

Practices

Infrastructures



Capacity

- To scale up interventions and improved practices we must first scale up capacity to implement
- Building implementation capacity is essential to maximizing the use of EBPs and other innovations
- Consider the adequacy of what is already in place and the capacity of local personnel to envision and implement change.
- Implement new practices/initiatives long enough for their effectiveness to receive a fair test.

(Fixen & Blaise, 2009)



Practices

- Weight of evidence
- Selection of “best fit” interventions
- Balancing fidelity and context
- Evaluation of efforts



Infrastructure

- Creating and sustaining a culture of change
- Alignment with other school reform efforts
- Policies and procedures
- Implementation plan
- Outreach
- Professional development



Integrated & Compensatory TA

Training Outcomes (% Use by training component)

Training Component	Knowledge	Skill Demonstration	Coaching in classrooms
Theory and Discussion	10%	5%	0%
..+Demonstration in Training	30%	20%	0%
...+ Practice & Feedback in Training	60%	69%	5%
...+ Coaching in Classroom	95%	95%	95%

Joyce & Showers, 2002



Research Gaps

Implementation Gap

Intervention Gap

Integration Gaps

Rule -based



Gaps in Current Research-Interventions

- What interventions are effective, for whom, and under what conditions
- Dropout prevention interventions almost always include multiple components, but the effects of specific intervention components on dropping out has not been determined
- There is a need to build an empirical base of dropout prevention intervention strategies and programs to answer the critical question



Gaps in Current Research-Intervention Models

- Significant known predictors of which students are likely to drop out and which stay in school exist for students as early as elementary and middle school
 - How do these factors interact? Are they equally weighted? Do they change over time for students, or are they fixed?



Gaps in Research - Diversity

- What are the factors that impede graduation rates among culturally and ethnically diverse male youth with disabilities?
- What are the current gaps and barriers in dropout prevention with regards to the targeted population?
- What school level support structures need to be in place for students with disabilities and how these supports impact student performance?



Concept of Engagement

- Statistically sound and theoretically comprehensive measures are needed to further investigate the significance and role of engagement in school processes and outcomes
 - What relationships exist among the types of engagement?
 - What are the direct and indirect effects of these variables on school dropout and completion?



Gaps in Current Research-Infrastructure

- How are decisions about graduation made and how do these decisions impact students school experiences and their post secondary goals?
- What are the effects of length of time in high school on students with disabilities
 - Does more time in school:
 - help students get more academic support
 - Make students feel more isolated
 - Improve post secondary goal attainment



Gaps in Current Research-Infrastructure

- Examine the types of school environments in which students with identified disabilities perform best in terms of attendance and grade course performance.
 - What relationships exist across environments (education, home, health, mental health, ect.)



Gaps in Research- rules

- What are the effects of compulsory attendance, sanctions and other rule based efforts on dropout rates for youth with disabilities?

Discussion

Where do we go from here- what strategic opportunities for collaboration exist to advance the research agenda?

Expected Outcome

Assist ICDR Federal Partners to formulate a coordinated research agenda to address dropout prevention for students with disabilities



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